

THE

TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MINISTRY-AT-LARGE,

IN LOWELL, MASS.,

TO THE

LOWELL MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

LOWELL, MASS.:

MARDEN & ROWELL, PRINTERS, MUSEUM BUILDING, MERRIMACK STREET.

1874.

P R E F A C E .

In presenting this 29th annual report of the Ministry-at-Large, we have given the number of applications received from different nationalities. The number of applicants can only be ascertained accurately by transcribing the whole list of names, and as our report is made up at the very busiest season of the year with us, we have little leisure for extra labor. The number of individuals relieved, directly and indirectly, would be about one-half the number of applications, and the number of families would not exceed one-fourth or one-fifth of the whole. In printing this report, special cases named in the reading have been omitted.

H. C. D.

REPORT.

To the Directors of the Lowell Missionary Society:

It has fallen to my lot to report to you the labors and observations of another year of this ministry; and no more pleasing task could have been assigned me, for while my walks have been mainly among the poor and lowly, and many of the scenes I have been called to contemplate have been sad and cheerless, the operations of this ministry have so often fallen like blessed sunshine on the darkest of these spots, drying up their sorrow, and changing despair into new life and new hope, that it becomes a pleasure to me to be able to report it, as doubtless it will afford you satisfaction to know that your benefactions have, at least in some degree, accomplished their purpose. At no time since my connection with this work of relief, have I seen so much real want and destitution as during the past year, and at no time have the beauty and importance of this charity been more strikingly apparent.

THE HISTORY OF THE YEAR IN ITS RELATION TO THE POOR.

When we entered upon the year, the snow lay upon the ground nearly four feet deep, and, though there was no stagnation in business at that time, there were, nevertheless, many waiting for the return

of spring to find "something to do." But the spring was long delayed, and not a few found themselves obliged to seek charitable aid, or accept the provisions of the state—the latter alternative I find dreaded almost as much as imprisonment in the House of Correction. During the summer months, there was work enough, but there was also an unusual amount of sickness; and a higher death-rate, the last week in August, than was ever experienced before in Lowell. Early in autumn financial troubles began to disturb the manufacturing and industrial interests of the country, and as Lowell was among the last to yield to the pressure, scores of laborers thrown out of employment elsewhere, sought it here, but sought it in vain. Being here with no means and no employment, the question was, how to get away again. Bitter complaints were heard, reflecting on transportation companies, who, through their agents, had induced persons to emigrate, through highly colored representations of the advantages of labor in this country, and thousands throughout the land were anxious to return to their homes, but were unable to do so. The French coming into the United States from the British Provinces, found it more convenient to return than those who had crossed the water, and by the first of December, we saw it stated from a Montreal paper, that 30,000 of these had already returned to the Canadas. Later in the season our own mills commenced running on three-quarter time, or on reduced pay, which was a judicious arrangement for the poor, when a reduction became necessary, as many could

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live on reduced incomes for a short time who would have become destitute if thrown wholly out of employment. But there are cases where only one or two in the family are able to work—families of five or six—one we know of seven in number, whose wants are supplied by a single pair of hands. On such the reduction falls heavily.

To these misfortunes was added that of the closing in upon us of an unusually early winter. By the middle of November the ground was frozen solid and the earth was again covered with snow. For two or three weeks the weather was intensely cold, and all out-of-door work depending on the season had to be abandoned, and to the other necessities were now added those of fuel and winter clothing. December was milder, but the financial pressure tightened and its effects became more and more apparent as the season advanced and the supplies on hand were consumed.

AMOUNT OF RELIEF AFFORDED.

Such is a brief history of the year in its special relation to the poor of this city. I have accordingly a large list of applications for aid to report for the year—the whole number being one thousand nine hundred and four (1904); distributed in respect to nationality as follows:

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| 720 Irish, | 199 English, |
| 513 American, | 67 French, |
| 328 Scotch, | 77 of other nationalities, |

being 1391 foreign and 513 American. Of this number 351 were refused and 1553 were in some degree supplied.

The amount of money expended in meeting these demands was \$3003.65, being only a little more than \$500 in excess of what was expended the preceding year. Of this sum \$1295.12 were drawn from the treasury of the Lowell Missionary Society, including \$431.68 placed there on "special account," and \$1708.53 from the treasury of the Nesmith Fund. Besides this we have distributed 767 articles of wearing apparel, nearly 200 yards of cotton cloth, a quantity of cotton flannel and also of cloth for men's wear, presented by different friends of the mission. Generous contributions were also received for the three annual festivals held at the Chapel.

Thus it will be seen that there is no inconsiderable amount of charity dispensed through the agency of the ministry-at-large; and it becomes proportionately a matter of interest to the contributors to know how their money is spent, and the class of persons to whom it goes.

THE WORK AND THE CHARACTER OF THE APPLICANTS.

The field of our operations is large. It embraces the whole city, all denominations and all nationalities. The average number of applications during the year, not including August and Sundays, was a little more than six and one-half a day; and for the last month it has been eleven. A certain proportion of these are always new cases, often requiring more time for investigation than we have at our immediate disposal. For the work of the ministry-at-large is by no means confined to the dispensing of *material* charity. It is

called upon to do all sorts of charitable work—to write letters, and do business of almost every description for those unable to do it for themselves, help people out of all manner of difficulties resulting from inexperience, devise "ways and means" for those to whom no way seems open and no means possible, besides ordinary pulpit and parochial duties which are to be discharged the same as in other parishes.

With this amount of work on hand and the great variety of persons with whom we have to deal,—some of them trained to deception from their very childhood—it would not be surprising if some of our charity went amiss. We expect this. Guard against it as we will, there is waste everywhere. The girl in the mill sees it under her loom. The farmer makes provision for it in his sowing. In the parable, only a little of the seed sown fell on good ground, and brought forth its harvest. The business man makes liberal allowances for "bad debts," unsalable goods and sundry losses. In machinery there is friction and therefore loss of power. Everywhere we find it.

And yet, of the three thousand dollars expended by this ministry the last year in aid of the poor, I feel confident that a very small proportion has gone where it has not been a real mercy. I have felt better satisfied, on the whole, with the results of our charity the last year than ever before. The applicants on an average have been of a higher and better class. Their wants, though considerable for the time being, have been of a more temporary character and the assistance rendered has seemed "to go to the

right spot," and to do more real good. When an application is made by a party hitherto unknown to us, at a time when we are unable to look into the case, we sometimes give to a very limited extent, that immediate suffering may be avoided; and then at our earliest convenience acquaint ourselves with the character and circumstances of the applicant, and in some cases we require a recommendation from some reliable person. But these recommendations are only relied on till by personal investigation we have satisfied ourselves of the real character and circumstances of the applicant. There is a class of persons upon whom charity seems to be thrown away. They have no "faculty," as aunt Chloe, in Uncle Tom's Cabin, would say; and but little idea of economy. If we place them on their feet they have no ability to stand. Extravagant in little they soon have nothing. We are often reminded of a story we heard when a lad of a woman whose commissary department consisted of two geese, and nothing more. The good dame killed them both on the same day and made a feast. When asked why she did not reserve one for another occasion, she replied with an air of satisfaction, that "while she lived she wanted to *live!*" This is characteristic of a class of poor with whom we meet. They do not know how to save, nor how to make the most out of a little. They are not quick to learn the leaks nor skilled to stop them. Their habits are often like an open wound, draining the system and impoverishing the blood. Five cents a day for a glass of beer and fifty cents a week for tobacco seems but a trifle, and

yet it is sufficient to keep a small family in fuel the year round. Such cases we call "chronic," because they are incurable. It is not always their own fault. The disease is sometimes inherited. And humanity often pleads for charity even for these to cover the multitude of their faults. Happily the proportion of such cases, and also of those of incurably dissolute and intemperate habits applying at our office is less than formerly, and by the rigid application of our rules I think they will continue to grow less.

But wastefulness is by no means characteristic of all the poor. Very many are exceedingly careful of their means, and manage to live on the very smallest possible allowance. The wages of one such family, divided by the number in the family after deducting the rent, gave eleven cents a day to each member. Allowing two cents a day each for fuel, lights and clothing, we find them reduced to three cents a meal for each person. This beats the Holly Tree Inn for economy! And on entering the house where this calculation was made, you would scarcely suspect any need. Another family where we made similar calculations, we found it thirteen cents to an individual. This seems impossible, and doubtless would be impossible without some outside help. And yet I have known families, where for weeks together they must have lived on still less than this.

Sufficient allowance is not made for the disadvantages of the circumstances under which the poor are obliged to live. We expect them to practice an economy which is simply impossible to them. It has

been well said that “the poverty of the poor is their destruction.” They are obliged to buy in small quantities, pay the highest prices, and often receive the most inferior articles. A writer in the Boston Daily Globe, commanding the frugality of the French, says: “Give a Frenchman a chine of a horse and he will furnish an abundance of cheap, tasteful and palatable dishes,” and then adds that “if our people had something of the frugality of the French peasantry, we should hear fewer complaints of poverty and desititution.” Precisely so. But where is the time to come from to cook up the chine of a horse—or of a pig if you prefer the meat—into an abundance of tasteful dishes, when eleven hours a day is spent in the mill. It must be remembered that in scores of these families, the house is closed in the morning at 6 o’clock,—or is left in charge of a few little children, too young to go in the mill,—and not opened again except, perhaps, for a few minutes at noon, till seven in the evening. At that time, after a long hard day’s work, there is but little energy left to cook up savory dishes, or to carefully mend all the little rents made in the children’s clothing during the day. Doubtless, they do not all do as well as they might, but there are those who attend to all their kitchen work, and make their children’s clothing after eleven hours’ work in the mill, and sometimes in addition take in washing.

The season has developed an unusual crop of “Tramps,” but until you can anchor them but little

can be done to improve their condition. A roving life dissipates both means and morals. These men are great sufferers, but they prefer suffering with idleness, to plenty with work. They are great geniuses in their way, and will change their attitude to suit the circumstance, as dexterously as the chameleon will change its color. It makes but little difference what outside they put on, what stories they tell, how religious they are, how many tears they shed, and all that, inside they are, with very rare exceptions, all alike, low, idle, intemperate imposters. One rule can safely be applied to the whole class, namely, give them all "leave to withdraw." And yet, once in a while, you find one that you cannot conscientiously turn away. But this is the "exception," and not the rule. There was a time when the duty of the public towards the stranger was far different from what it is at the present day. When there were no lodging houses, and no provision for the comfort of the traveller, then it became a duty to care for "the stranger in our midst," and perhaps make room for him in our own house. But the conditions of society have changed. Provision is made for the stranger, if not the best, yet tolerable, by the city or town authorities; and personal safety, as well as the best interests of the community, demands that this vagrant, roaming mode of life should not be encouraged.

The case, however, is very different where a man comes into the city with his family, or a young man comes from his country home, with the view to settle down and become a permanent resident. Such, if in

need, receive our prompt attention whenever their condition is made known to us. Lowell, being a manufacturing city, there are a great many of this class who are attracted hither by our industries, with the hope of improving their circumstances by working in the mill. Accordingly, four-fifths of those whom we aid are families depending upon factory labor for their support.

The majority of these are such as have been unable to acquire a "legal settlement," and cannot therefore legally receive aid from the city, and but for a little timely help from some benevolent institution, they would be compelled to accept the provisions of the state or starve. The latter alternative would be to reflect on a christian civilization, which would be unkind in them, and the former involves sacrifices little understood by the public. The state refuses to extend help to its poor through the agency of a town or city, no matter how little they may require, except in case of severe illness, but insists on the removal of the applicant at once to the state alms-house. This involves the breaking up of the home, the selling of the furniture, the sacrifice of what partial means of support may remain, and the dispersion of the family, perhaps never to meet again. When it is stated that out of 150 infants admitted to the Tewksbury Alms-house the last five years, 131 died before they were a year old, we cannot find it in our heart to urge a mother, however destitute and helpless, to accept so costly a charity. The law of settlement needs revising so that temporary relief may be given to the

worthy State poor in the town or city where they live. But until then, humanity and christianity alike forbid that we should suffer any but the *criminally* poor to be obliged to seek its shelter, when perhaps \$25 or \$50 would place them beyond its necessity.

I have felt greatly the need of a city hospital, where the poor, under certain restrictions, might be received and properly cared for, free of charge. St. John's Hospital has already done good service in this direction, as it admits a limited number on the "free list," without regard to sect or religion, and the care they receive is the very best; but its present accommodations are not sufficient to meet the demands of the whole city. Two patients, one English and the other Scotch, afflicted with consumption, have been removed by us to the Consumptives' Home, at Grove Hall, Boston Highlands, an institution under the charge of Charles Cullis, M. D., of Boston, which relies for its support on voluntary contributions, "sent in answer to prayer." One of these patients returned in a month, and has gone to England where he is still living. The other is still at the institution, and writes thanking me for finding her "so good a home." I made a third application to Dr. Cullis, and received a ticket of admission for the patient, but on account of her extreme prostration we have been unable to avail ourselves of this excellent charity in her behalf.

The services at the Chapel remain as they were, with the addition of an occasional Sunday evening service, held in the large sewing room, which has been neatly repaired and honored by our boys with

the name of "Eirene Hall." There has been a steady increase of numbers and interest throughout the year, both in the congregation and the Sunday School; the latter has increased from 182 on the roll, the previous year, to 245 this year. The Church has been re-organized under the name of "The Church of Christian Charity" with nineteen new members, embracing some of the older members of the Sunday School, and there seems to be a healthful moral and religious influence gradually extending itself among our numbers, elevating the whole tone and spirit of our worship. Great attention has been given to singing, and much time and labor have been devoted to preparing for the several Sunday School concerts, which have been greatly enjoyed both by the school and by the public. But the merely sensational has been avoided as unnatural and unhealthy, and in all our efforts we have relied mainly upon a steady, quiet, but earnest sowing of the seed, waiting patiently for its natural growth.

Whatever success we have attained in our Sunday School is largely due to the excellent corps of teachers with which we have been favored, representing various denominations in the city, some of whom we have never seen excelled, and all of whom are of the very best. Their work is often toilsome, and sometimes discouraging, but their faithfulness brings its reward at last, and no more beautiful crown will be worn "in that day" than shall adorn the brow of the devoted teacher of the Sunday School. The older members of the School and others

of the parish have shared in the interest of our work and contributed in no small degree to its advancement. There has grown up already among us a very respectable working force, whose zeal is not the result of hire, but of interest, for it has been a long time since any reward has been offered in our school, other than the inspirations of a better life. And this, after all, is the very best, and in the end the most successful prize that can be offered as the reward of faithfulness. It costs little, creates no jealousies and raises no false hopes.

Our temperance society, though a branch of an extensive order, was organized at the Chapel as an auxiliary to our mission work, and as such it has not disappointed our expectations. It has a membership at present of fifty-seven, and it has taken its place with our regular services. Our meetings, though not large, are among the best we have. They are dignified and orderly, homelike in character, and educational in their purpose; and already their effect has gone out to the home and family, where parents have abjured the cup through the influence of their children, whose zeal was kindled at our altar. We venture to suggest that if all the pastors in the city would organize similar societies in connection with their respective churches, and hold themselves responsible for their character and usefulness, it would not only redeem the temperance movement from the charges of frivolity and imbecility, against which it struggles, but it would become a moral force in the community, against which the liquor interests would

find it hard to contend; while to their several churches, through its instrumentality, there would be added daily "such as should be saved."

We have also a good report to bring of our sewing school, which meets on Wednesday afternoon of each week, from Thanksgiving in the Fall, to Fast Day in the Spring. It numbers 110 little girls; an increase of 40 since last year, and is of a more satisfactory character than it has hitherto been, since we have known it.

Improvements have been made in the lower rooms of the Chapel to the value of about \$400, only \$342.40 of which were drawn from the treasury of this Society for that purpose, the balance having been met in other ways. We have now an exceedingly neat and tasty hall for our sewing school, evening meetings and annual festivals, and also an office, both convenient and comfortable. It has added much to the good cheer in which we are enabled to do our work, and already its good effect is seen on our meetings. I am a firm believer in the educational influence of our surroundings; and my observations at the Chapel have not weakened my faith in this article of my creed. If "there are sermons in stones and in running brooks," there may be, also, in painted walls and frescoed ceilings.

We desire to express our thanks to the Directors for this delightful change in our Chapel, which has added so much to our comfort and convenience, and also to the many friends of this mission, for their kindly aid and co-operation in our work of relief.

Very rarely have we met a man who has not recognized the office of mercy in our work and rendered us every facility possible for its prosecution. Especially is this true of the agents and other officers of the several manufacturing companies in the city. Whether corporations have souls or not, I will leave to the philosophers to discuss, but this I know, their agents are not unmindful of the necessities of the poor in their employ. They are continually dispensing charity in a quiet way in its various forms, most frequently in a way that does not appear as charity, but which is nevertheless the truest charity. The unrestricted access which I have always had to the mills in the discharge of my duties, and the interest manifested for those for whom I have sought employment, have been exceedingly gratifying to me, and of no little advantage to the poor.

I wish also to express my thanks to our excellent Mayor, Hon. Francis Jewett, for his humanity and kindness to the poor, and his readiness always to do just the right thing. If a few dollars now and then have been paid from the city treasury for the state poor, it has always been in the interests of humanity, and a thousand lips will bless the deed, while the city itself will be none the poorer in the end for the trifling expenditure, and all who have contributed to the aid of the poor, through our ministry or otherwise, in money, clothing, word or deed, will receive our grateful acknowledgments. From all sources, regardless of sect, we have received material tokens of a kindly interest in our work. Even a protracted

and severe illness in the family has not deprived us of an annual generous contribution of garments.

And now we enter upon another year, if not with the prospect of a very severe winter before us, yet with hundreds still out of employment, and many with families whose circumstances appeal to us with irresistible force. A few months will put them beyond these most pressing needs, but in the meantime our exchequer will need replenishing. There remains in the treasury of the Nesmith fund less than \$200, to cover a period of two months, and from our own treasury our expenditures have greatly exceeded our receipts for the last few weeks, and unless refilled must soon be exhausted.

This society fortunately is not in debt, and by your aid, always so promptly given whenever needed, we trust that it shall never be thus embarrassed. It is given to us strictly in charge, not to exceed the funds in the treasury in our distribution of aid, and we believe the interests of the ministry will be subserved by observing this rule. But let me assure you, it is one thing to sit in our comfortable homes and *hear* of suffering, and quite another to stand by its side in its dismal abode and look it squarely in the face. It is easy to say "no" to a graceless tramp in our office or store, but the word sticks in our throat when the pleading eyes of four or five half famished little children appeal to our sympathies. At such times we have almost felt that we should be forgiven if our feelings of humanity became too strong for our rules. Could you go with me one week, or even

one afternoon, and witness the scenes that have become familiar to my eyes, and see how great a blessing this ministry is in the homes of the poor, I know you would say there shall never be any lack of means to carry forward its work. As the city increases in population, it becomes more and more necessary, and its benefits are more and more widely distributed. Therefore, growing with the growth of the city, it shall be like the "grain of mustard seed which a man took and cast into his garden, and it grew and waxed a great tree and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it."

Respectfully submitted,

H. C. DUGANNE.

Lowell, Dec. 31, 1873.

APPENDIX.

DIRECTORS OF THE LOWELL MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| E. B. PATCH, President, | P. ANDERSON, |
| A. E. BOWERS, Secretary, | WM. E. LIVINGSTON, |
| D. B. BARTLETT, Treasurer, | H. A. HILDRETH, |
| J. C. PALFREY, | H. B. COBURN. |
| M. G. HOWE, | |

OFFICERS AND TEACHERS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| MRS. H. C. DUGANNE, | Superintendent. |
| D. E. BEDELL, | Assistant Superintendent. |
| MISS GERTRUDE SHELDEN, | Librarian. |
| FRANK MOODY, | Organist. |

TEACHERS.

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| MISS L. E. PENHALLOW, | MISS SUSIE H. CHASE, |
| MISS ANNA F. ANDERSON, | MISS ALICE J. FELLOWS, |
| MISS MARTHA C. WALKER, | MISS LOUISA A. DALEY, |
| MRS. J. A. KNOWLES, JR., | MRS. I. C. EASTMAN, |
| MISS HATTIE BOND, | REV. H. C. DUGANNE, |
| MISS ELIZABETH BALCH, | J. D. HUBBARD, |
| MISS CLARA E. FISKE, | MRS. NANCY JOHNSON, |
| MRS. JAMES WRIGHT, | FRANK P. CABOTT. |

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

GENERAL ACCOUNT.

| RECEIPTS. | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Balance on hand Jan. 1 1873.. | \$809 90 |
| Coll. by Wm. Lamson, Esq .. | 1,071 00 |
| From Manufacturing Co.s... . | 1,068 00 |
| Interest on deposits..... | 69 80 |
| | <hr style="margin-bottom: 5px;"/> |
| | \$3018 70 |

EXPENDITURES.

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Salary | \$1,475 02 |
| Repairs..... | 342 40 |
| Janitor | 96 00 |
| Fuel and Gas..... | 83 08 |
| Wm. Lamson for collecting. | 80 32 |
| Printing Reports..... | 39 00 |
| Organist..... | 52 00 |
| Insurance..... | 49 43 |
| Incidentals..... | 7 38 |
| | <hr style="margin-bottom: 5px;"/> |
| | \$2224 63 |
| Balance..... | <hr style="margin-bottom: 5px;"/> 794 07 |

CHARITY ACCOUNT.

RECEIPTS.

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Balance on hand..... | \$392 92 |
| Coll. in Unitarian Church..... | 170 57 |
| From Dalton Fund..... | 156 50 |
| From Holbrook Fund..... | 30 00 |
| Miss Dana..... | 50 00 |
| Sundry Coll. by H. C. D.... | 90 45 |
| Miss Penhallow..... | 10 00 |
| Proceeds of a reception at Mrs. D. S. Richardson's... | 170 00 |
| | <hr style="margin-bottom: 5px;"/> |
| | \$1070 44 |

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Rev. H. Wood on special act. | 60 00 |
| A. C. Skinner " " | 25 00 |
| Mrs. J. Nesmith " " | 25 00 |
| S. S. Collections " " | 41 91 |
| Contributions for Christmas | 45 32 |
| Various sources..... | 234 45 |
| | <hr style="margin-bottom: 5px;"/> |
| | \$431 68 |
| Nesmith Fund..... | <hr style="margin-bottom: 5px;"/> 1708 53 |
| Total..... | <hr style="margin-bottom: 5px;"/> 3210 65 |

EXPENDITURES.

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| From Charity act. of Lowell | |
| Missionary Society..... | \$863 44 |
| The special account..... | 431 68 |
| Nesmith Fund..... | 1,708 53 |
| | <hr style="margin-bottom: 5px;"/> |
| | 3003 65 |
| Balance..... | <hr style="margin-bottom: 5px;"/> \$207 00 |



